SARON MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Saron Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)
510 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Phone: 269-983-1273
Facebook:www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

Saron's Mission: ***Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!!***

The Rev. Joan Oleson, Pastor
Home: 269-983-2475
Email: oleson@saronlutheran.org

Marcus Roll, Music Director
Email: roll1mc@gmail.com

Irma Gorman, Organist

Amanda Bradley, Admin Assistant
Cell: 419-306-5780
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
bradley717@gmail.com

Ken Boyd, Bookkeeper
Email: financial@saronlutheran.org

Sara Porter, Childcare Specialist
Email: portersara20@gmail.com

Joe Ulrey, Saron Congregational Council President
Cell: 313-718-2563
Email: josephulrey@yahoo.com

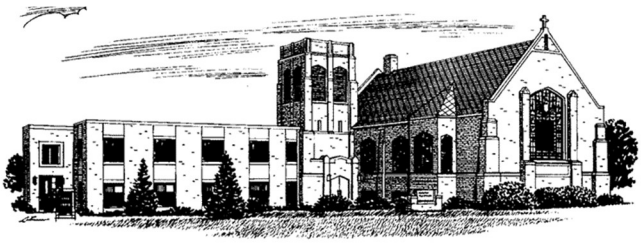
Typical Sunday at Saron:

Summer (began **May 26**):
10am Worship
On-Location and via Zoom
Nursery Available
No Learning Hour

Fall, Winter and Spring (begins **Sept 8**):
8:30am Worship On-Location
9:40am Learning Hour for Ages 3-Adult
11am Worship with Zoom Option
Nursery Available

We hold in prayer:
The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton,
Presiding Bishop, ELCA
The Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee, Bishop of the
North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA
The Episcopal Diocese of Western MI

Our Companion Synods:
Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras
Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
Lutheran Church of Latvia



PASTOR JOAN'S ARTICLE FOR JUNE 2024

I am partial to banners without (or with few) words. It allows the viewer to interpret what is seen in her own way and perhaps in different ways, by the same viewer, depending on the day. On Sunday, May 19, we celebrated Pentecost. In the narthex were banners that I just love. They have images of people with tongues of fire above them, representing that first Pentecost experience (Acts 2:3). Bright red background, a variety of colors and designs that make up the people, divided tongues as of fire. What more could you want? Yet, a huge part of what I like is found in the making of these banners. It is the part that not everyone knows (or perhaps, remembers).

Several years ago, over a couple of Sundays, Saron attendees were invited to head to the dining room after worship where they could paint a square. Sure, there were some groupings of colors that could be used, but then the design was up to the individual. Lines? Swirls? Stripes? Polka dots? Abstract? Creativity took hold. The squares were then placed together into the artistic and engaging pieces you see, displaying the beauty of the creator and the Creator, the emerging uniqueness of each individual painted canvas, then joined together into the community of all who gathered. Sure seems the work of the Holy Spirit to me! In the words used as part of our greeting on Sunday, *"Come, Holy Spirit: fill the hearts of your faithful people, and kindle in us the fire of your love."*

- Pastor Joan

Welcome

Bishop Craig Satterlee will be joining us at Saron's worship on **Sunday, June 16 at 10am**, where he will offer proclamation of the word and a time for conversation in a forum type setting after worship. You can ask questions about the pastoral transition process or about anything related to our synod and/or the ELCA.

General Information

OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Joan
Monday-Thursday Mornings
Amanda Bradley (Admin Assistant):
Mondays & Thursdays 9am-noon
Helping Hands Office Volunteers:
Wednesdays 9:00am-11am (approx)
Ken Boyd (Bookkeeper):
Tuesday Mornings and by Appointment

When Pastor is out of town, emergency pastoral care information can be obtained by calling the church office (269/983-1273) or contacting the council president.

Note: Emails for Pastor should be addressed to oleson@saronlutheran.org to ensure privacy. Emails to Amanda and the church office should be sent to info@saronlutheran.org.

Caring and Sharing

IN OUR PRAYERS

Tom Taylor is at Caretel in St. Joseph;
John Olson is at Woodland Terrace in Bridgman.

Happy Birthday Wishes to Saron's Members!

6/2 Ann Dosch
6/4 June Embree
6/5 Judi Huff
6/6 Danielle Hohman
6/6 Dale Lucy
6/7 Nicholas Maly
6/7 Elinor Van Egmond
6/11 Maeva Bommarito
6/11 Tyler Cook
6/12 Charles Kohs
6/12 Stephania Ngonyani
6/12 Deborah Vollmer
6/15 Hunter Zwar
6/16 Marilyn Frey
6/18 James Peterson
6/18 Rebeccah Strine
6/20 Cami Vitek
6/22 Larry Weber
6/26 Phillip Preston
6/27 Carol Hafer
6/29 David Young

Happy Anniversary Wishes to Saron's Members!

6/1 Brian & Coanne Hohman
6/2 Deanna & Robert Deaton
6/12 Lindsay & Scott Gaspari
6/16 Kathie & Dave Bradley
6/17 Kathy & Gary Cowall
6/17 Joan & James Oleson
6/21 Dan & Sue Fortenbacher
6/25 Richard & Dawn Osgood
6/27 Claire & Kyle Carter
6/28 Gayle & James Peterson
6/30 Don & Carol Hafer

"God's Blessings for a very happy day and year round!"

If there are any omissions from the birthday or anniversary list, or if a date is incorrect, please let us know so we can get it correct in the future!

CONGRATULATIONS

We welcomed **Elijah James Nicholas** into the church as a full, adult member on May 19, through Affirmation of Baptism. Elijah's Confirmation Faith Statement: *I believe God loves me. I feel that love through my parents, friends, and family. I believe God helps me to be a good person by being kind and generous to others.*

Congratulations, Elijah!

We are planning to receive new members soon! It's not too late to be included. Contact Pastor Joan.

FORTIFY & fly

You know what they say about timing being everything? Well, we ran into that with the painting project involving the sanctuary and narthex. With all the things going on in the church this summer (baptism, first communion, weddings…), we decided to postpone until after August 1. As for the tech projects, we are waiting for the proposal regarding potential lighting upgrades and once a part arrives, we can get the monitor up and running in the nursery. They will be able to watch the worship service!

We will continue to provide updates until all projects are complete and all the money has been responsibly spent. As always, thank you for being with us on this journey.

Worship

NEW: ASSISTED HEARING DEVICES

Our new sound system in the sanctuary came with headphones to help those having difficulty hearing the worship service. If this may be of benefit to you, ask Marcus if you can try one out.

SENSORY BAGS

As part of extending an unconditional welcome to all, we now have Sensory Bags available for use during worship or at other times when helpful. These bags contain a variety of fidgets that can help someone feel more able to sit quietly and/or focus. We also have noise canceling headphones for those who are sound sensitive. These brightly colored bags can be found in the narthex.

PRAYER GROUP

You are invited to offer your prayer petitions (concerns or thanksgivings) via our attendance cards each Sunday. Requests can also be made confidentially online via a link in our Thursday mailings. You may include as much detail as you wish. Requests are then given to the Monday prayer group. **You are also invited to be part of the Monday group at 11am.** We follow a simple format of morning prayer and insert the petitions and prayers for Saron's ministry and the world. You don't even have to pray aloud, if you would prefer to pray quietly. Most weeks we are done in 30 minutes. If you want to know more about this ministry, please contact Pastor Joan.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Sponsor a week by using the link in the weekly email or by contacting the church office. Please note any occasion/thanksgiving to be recognized in the bulletin. Flowers are $35 per vase. Checks are payable to Saron with "Flowers" as the memo. Take them home to enjoy then **simply return the vase to Saron.**

Nursery

Nursery service is available during worship. In order to utilize the space most effectively, this option is primarily directed towards our youngest members and guests. For preschoolers that need more physical and/or emotional space, activities are available in the narthex, including clipboards with coloring pages and children's bulletins. **It's vital to embrace family units in all stages and as such, we gladly welcome wiggles and giggles in worship!**

The goal of the nursery is to provide a safe environment to facilitate a meaningful worship experience for families. We recognize that may not look the same for all and encourage sharing concerns and suggestions.

We are always looking for additional helpers to share the load. Contact Marilyn Lucy (269/759-3464) with questions or interest.

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to read and reflect on the Scriptures for the day.

June 2: 2nd Sunday after Pentecost
Deuteronomy 5:12-15
Psalm 81:1-10
2 Corinthians 4:5-12
Mark 2:23-3:6

June 9: 3rd Sunday after Pentecost
Genesis 3:8-15
Psalm 130
2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1
Mark 3:20-35

June 16: 4th Sunday after Pentecost
Ezekiel 17:22-24
Psalm 92:1-4, 12-15
2 Corinthians 5:6-10 [11-13] 14-17
Mark 4:26-34

June 23: 5th Sunday after Pentecost
Job 38:1-11
Psalm 107:1-3, 23-32
2 Corinthians 6:1-13
Mark 4:35-41

June 30: 6th Sunday after Pentecost
Lamentations 3:22-33
Psalm 30
2 Corinthians 8:7-15
Mark 5:21-43

YOUTH GROUP

This group typically meets once per month after the late service for food, fun and fellowship. Friends are always welcome! **Contact Scott at scottgaspari@outlook.com with any questions or to be added to the email list.**

ELCA YOUTH GATHERING

We have less than 2 months until our group leaves for the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans! We are offering two easy ways to support these teens and their adult leaders.

- **Pop Can Drive** – continuing throughout June, there will be a collection bin for bags of returnable cans.
- **Envelope Board –** In June, we'll have a display board with various envelopes intended for a specific purpose, such as $10 for snacks or $15 to purchase a lunch. If you would like to help, you simply put the specified amount in the envelope and drop it in the collection box.

We sincerely appreciate the generous support we've already received. As of printing, Mia, Hunter, Alaina and Brooke have $2,674 towards their goal. The money collected will go towards trip expenses but also purchasing batteries for emergency kits as per our assignment as a Region 6 participant. We ask that you keep these 4 and their leaders in your prayers. We want them to have a safe and meaningful trip, full of new friendships and once-in-a-lifetime experiences!

Learning

Saron is a congregation seeking to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.

We have many educational options to fit your needs and schedule. Always feel welcome to join us, at any time and for as many sessions as works for you.

SUNDAY LEARNING HOUR

Our program year will begin again on September 8. We have opportunities for many ages and stages!

The Sunday Learning Hour (9:40am-10:30am) offers the following options:

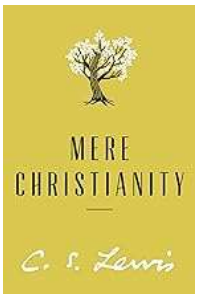
- Preschool - Grade 5: Sunday School
- Grades 6-8: Confirmation Classes
- High School - Adult: Adult Forum

THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

We will continue to meet throughout the summer, outside in the parking lot, with a focus on the lessons of the week. **This group meets Thursday mornings at 9:30am.** Bring a chair and a Bible. We'll move inside as weather dictates. Contact Pastor Joan with any questions.

TUESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

We continue our study of the book *Mere Christianity* by C. S. Lewis. Published in 1952, the book is drawn from a collection of BBC radio talks that Lewis gave during World War II. David Vandenburgh will lead the study, which will run 12 weeks.



In *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis argues that there is a fundamental moral law that governs the universe and that Christianity offers the best explanation for this law. It is making for some fascinating and enlightening discussions.

We meet **Tuesday evenings at 6pm** in the upstairs lounge for one hour then adjourn to a local restaurant for food and fellowship. **All are welcome!**

If you have any questions, feel free to call, text, or email:
Bob Kynast (269-921-2786, bobkynast@gmail.com)
Don Hafer (269-985-3637, hafer.don@gmail.com)

FORUM & fellowship

This group will take a break for the summer and begin again in September. We typically meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays each month. Everyone is welcome.

Contact Ed Staude at 636/288-1016 with any questions.

BOOK CLUB

We are taking a short summer break and will gather again in August. Here are the books we've chosen for the rest of 2024 and into 2025:

8/4/24: *The Housekeepers* by Alex Hay
9/8/24: *All the Broken Places* by John Boyne
10/6/24: *Firekeepers Daughter* by Angeline Boulley
11/3/24: *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks
12/1/24: *The World Played Chess* by Robert Dugona
2/2/25: *Caste: The Origins of our Discontents* by I. Wilkerson.
3/2/25: *Iona Iverson's Rules for Commuting* by C. Pooley
4/6/25: *Ordinary Grace* by William Kent Krugger
5/4/25: *The Women* by Kristin Hannah

Join us in August! All who enjoy reading are welcome anytime, for one session or many. A good discussion is guaranteed.

Contact Kathy Cowall (269)428-0354
or kcowall@hotmail.com to receive email updates.

"Better to take a book and not have time to read, than have time to read and have no book."
-Crazy Book Lady

Women of the ELCA

DEBORAH CIRCLE

Deborah Circle will meet on **Wednesday, June 12 at 7pm** in the church lounge. Zoom will be available. A link for that will be emailed close to the meeting date. The study will be from the March/April 2024 issue of Gather magazine titled *Scripture and nature, Teachers of faith, session four: Food*, p. 32-37. Colleen Lundgren will lead the study.

If you have any questions about this group, contact Melanie at 269/449-8399.

Hospitality

SUNDAY SNACKS

Who doesn't love a snack during a time of fellowship in the narthex? If you would like to be a Sunday snack host, sign up via the link in our weekly email or call/email the office so Amanda can sign you up. Please plan for 30 to partake. Thank you!

Outreach

THE BENTON HARBOR SOUP KITCHEN™
HEART-TO-HEART™

Simple food, honestly sourced and lovingly made creates connections, gives fuel to the fight, and starves ignorance and apathy.
- Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen

On April 25, Mary Alice Brunner, Jim Manore, Dave & Kathie Bradley and Mary Zylema were busy at the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen preparing 100 lunches for guests. Meals included ham, potato salad, coleslaw, fruit, pickles, bread & homemade cookies. Thanks to our cookie bakers Kathi Anserello & Mary Alice Brunner.

If you are able to help with the preparation and serving, or by providing cookies, use the link in the weekly email or contact Kathie Bradley at 269-921-4665.

Thank you to all who continue to support this ministry with your time, contributions, and prayers.
Joyfully sharing God's love for all!

NOISY OFFERING

ELCA WORLD HUNGER

We receive a noisy offering (or those not-so-noisy bills) on the first Sunday of each month. These gifts are sent to ELCA World Hunger.

Thank you for your continued support!

EYE GLASS COLLECTION

Lions RECYCLE For Sight

Do you have any old glasses sitting in a drawer? Lions Club has provided a collection box in the narthex. We have several members who are Lions that can deliver our glasses to the club where they will do more good. Thank you!

INCLUSIVITY TASK FORCE

The Inclusivity Task Force is committed to extending a welcome to all. Our congregation adopted the following welcome statement and is a **Reconciling in Christ** church.

As a community of faith who *joyfully shares God's love for all*, we believe our lives and faith are strengthened by diversity. We strive to be a community who welcomes people of every ability, age, citizenship status, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, language, marital status, political perspective, race, and sexual orientation. We are committed to the work of racial equity. Whatever life's circumstance, we openly welcome and value you. We celebrate God's unconditional love and respond joyfully to your presence here. All are welcome. You are welcome.

If you ever have any questions or need clarification on our inclusivity journey, please feel free to call any one of the task force members:

Connor Ashley: cashley1837@outlook.com
Laurel Gacek: 269/470-6062 or mlmg2445@sbcglobal.net
Laura Hicks: 517/930-0579 or lhicks42@gmail.com
Darlene Kiessel: 269/313-4062 or kiessel@me.com
Pr Joan Oleson: 269/983-1273 or oleson@saronlutheran.org
Lindsay Gaspari: 847/373-8826 or lindsay.gaspari@yahoo.com

TWIN CITIES PRIDEFEST 2024

You are invited to witness to Saron's commitment of sharing "*God's Love for All!!!*" by attending the Twin Cities PrideFest on **June 22 from 4-8pm in Benton Harbor**. Saron will have a table at this event and would love to have lots of folks from Saron available to share our commitment to being a safe place for all to worship and fully participate in all levels of ministry.

Please let Pastor Joan, Laurel Gacek or Lindsay Gaspari know of your interest and we will happily share more information.

Support

The Support Committee typically meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 8pm via Zoom. Contact Don Hafer with any questions at 269/985-3637.

STOCK DONATIONS

Saron partners with TD Ameritrade, a brokerage firm, to accept stock donations. If you would like to donate stock, email Joe Ulrey at josephulrey@yahoo.com to receive more information. Thanks!

Facilities

HELPING HANDS (Previously Golden Hammers)

We do all sorts of things from building maintenance to preps for worship in the sanctuary to assembling bulletins and newsletters and so much more. We meet on Wednesdays around 9am and know you are invited – whatever your age, gender, or ability. There is a job for you to use your helping hands.

Other Bits of News

Saron primarily runs on volunteer power. Our dedicated congregation isn't huge but often keeps things running so smoothly, we don't even realize what is happening behind the scenes. For example, in May, volunteers cleaned/ organized the kitchen, vacuumed the sanctuary/narthex and cleaned bathrooms on weeks the cleaning service isn't scheduled, wiped down courtyard benches and cleared debris in preparation for the parade, donated food/water for the picnic, served at Blossomtime picnic and cleaned up afterwards, mowed the lawn, made/ purchased snacks for after services, prepared the sanctuary for worship, and so much more.

Without a doubt, it can be overwhelming to know where you can help but we make it easy by providing a place to start. Simply click on the links in the weekly email to sponsor Sunday snacks or to volunteer as a worship assistant. The Volunteer link also contains things like baking cookies for the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen or serving there on the 4th Thursday of the month.

As we begin transitioning to a new pastor, it is vital to have volunteer spots filled and filled EARLY to avoid the stress of last-minute assignments. Please use the links in the weekly email to fill a reader, usher, or building closer spot for NEXT week, or ideally NEXT month, rather than waiting until Saturday to see if we have a need for Sunday. This would be a huge help. Thank you!!!

THANK YOU

We had a fantastic turnout for the Annual Blossomtime Pre-Parade Picnic! We served 208 people in our community, including members with their families and friends, neighbors, entertainers, and Blossomtime royalty. Special thanks to Judi Huff, Kati Hooper, Karen Johnson, Sally Schmuhl and our chip/water donators for making this event happen. What a wonderful thing to have a reputation for. By opening our doors and serving, we are proving that we believe in our mission statement: ***Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!!***

Coming to a Solar System Near You:

To Infinity & Beyond:

God's Love Has No Boundaries

Monday, August 5 – Thursday, August 8
6:30pm – 8pm

This fun and interactive experience, targeted towards kids preschool through 5th grade, will include crafts, outdoor activites, lessons, music and more! Watch for more information about registration.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Many of you have been asking about the pastoral transition plans so for the next couple of months, I'll be providing the latest information via the newsletter.

From the Synod side, we are working through the call process with Rev. Christina Bright, Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Candidacy. She will be leading our first service (Aug 4) after Pastor's retirement and has been in contact with me to offer help with the transition as needed. Also make note that Bishop Satterlee will be here to preach on June 16 and will be staying for a Q&A session after worship.

Internally, at the May council meeting, all members of the council were tasked with developing transition plans to ensure we cover all support currently provided by Pastor Joan. Reviewing these transition plans will be a key item at our June council meeting.

Finally, I would like to thank the congregation members who have reached out with offers to provide help where needed. I have shared this with the appropriate committee and I expect the exact roles to be made clear in late June/early July. If you have an area you are especially interested in or have relevant background to help with, please let me know.

- Joe Ulrey, 2024 Saron Council President

150 YEARS
ANNIVERSARY

In 2025, Saron will celebrate our 150th anniversary! This will be a big deal and a huge undertaking, with events throughout that whole year. The committee has been working on preliminary planning and has established an important date for your calendar.

- August 10, 2025 -

We will have a celebratory worship with Bishop Craig Satterlee at 10am, followed by a dinner at Union & Social, a beautiful venue in St. Joseph. More details to come in the future but keep this date open during your travel planning for next year!

Living Water Ministries
Faith Formation, Service, Leadership, and Community

Did you know that our Synod has an awesome church camp???

Located on Stony Lake in New Era, Michigan, Living Water Ministries is a safe place for God's children to experience intentional community centered in Christ where they are formed in their faith, developed as leaders, and equipped as servants of the gospel. They offer a variety of summer programs for students completing grades 1 - 12 and specialty programs for those in foster care, adults with developmental disabilities, and high school students aspiring to be anti-racist leaders. Learn more at ELCALivingWater.com

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Summertime Thoughts on Stewardship

STEWARDS IN ALL SEASONS

"Summertime, and the livin' is easy . . ."

Well, Gershwin got it half right. It is summertime, or at least it will be on June 20th, but the livin' at Saron is not so easy right now. Pastor Joan, our rock for nearly 17 years, is leaving on July 31st, albeit to start a well-deserved retirement for which we wish her and Jim the best.

But that leaves the rest of us to endure a period of unease and perhaps even unrest as Saron goes through the call process to fill the huge vacancy left in her wake. The pessimists among us might think, "Wow, this is going to be devastating. Pastor Joan was the heart and soul of Saron. Will members leave the church and will others cut back on their contributions? How are we going to survive?" But for the realists among us, we know that Pastor Joan did her job well for all those years and is leaving behind a generous and caring congregation, a well-functioning Council, and dedicated staff and working committees. We will survive her leaving and will continue "***Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!!***"

Maybe it won't feel quite the same as we plan and implement the Fall 2024 Stewardship Season, but we are confident that the legacy Pastor Joan leaves behind will be reflected in Saron's continued generosity. Borrowing from last year's theme, stewardship really is "all about God," not about any one of us.

And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.
(Hebrews 13:16)

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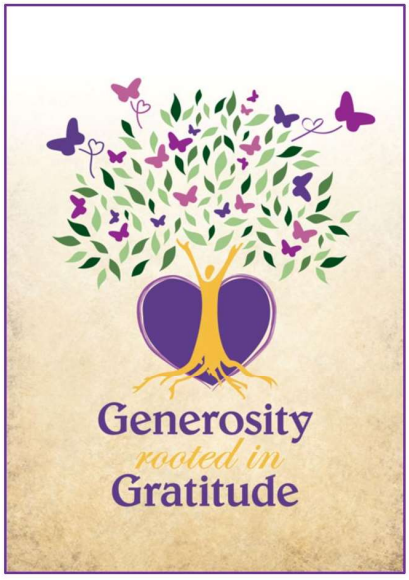
Speaking of the Fall 2024 Stewardship Season, it's now only about three months away and planning and preparations are proceeding in earnest. In March, we noted that this year's theme would build on the Fall 2023 focus on gratitude, and we are now pleased to introduce the theme and logo for Fall 2024, shown at the right. Kudos to Laurie Caple and Katherine Davis for creating this beautiful artwork from scratch – it's great to have such talent on hand!



Gratitude and generosity go hand in hand – gratitude is appreciating life's gifts, while generosity is sharing them. It's been said that gratitude unlocks the fullness of life; it turns "what we have" into "enough." Generosity is "the willingness to give help or support, especially more than is usual or expected," and that is the mindset that we hope to bolster at Saron, not just during this upcoming fall season, but throughout the years ahead as well.

Don Hafer, for the Stewardship Committee

SARON LUTHERAN CHURCH
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A Congregation of:
The North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

JUNE 2024 NEWSLETTER

2024 Women's Retreat

Blessing of the Graduates

Pentecost

JUNE 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Pastor On Vacation
2 10pm Worship with Zoom Option NO Learning Hour Pastor On Vacation →	**3** 11am Prayer Group	**4** 6pm Bible Study	**5** 9am Helping Hands	**6** 9:30am Bible Study	**7**	**8**
9 10pm Worship with Zoom Option NO Learning Hour Pastor On Vacation →	**10** 11am Prayer Group	**11** 6pm Bible Study 8pm Support Meeting	**12** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee 7pm Deborah Circle	**13** 9:30am Bible Study	**14**	**15**
16 10pm **Bishop Visit** & Worship with Zoom Option NO Learning Hour	**17** 11am Prayer Group 7pm Council Meeting **NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE**	**18** 6pm Bible Study	**19** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee	**20** 9:30am Bible Study	**21**	**22**
23/30 10pm Worship with Zoom Option NO Learning Hour	**24** 11am Prayer Group	**25** 6pm Bible Study	**26** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee	**27** 9:30am Bible Study **SOUP KITCHEN DAY**	**28**	**29**